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New York, 25 September 1995

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON FISCAL POLICY REFORMS IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 16-17 March 1995

Preparatory process for the
High-level Intergovernmental Meeting

GE.95-51442

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD convened the Expert Group Meeting on Fiscal Policy Reforms in the Least Developed Countries from 16 to 17 March 1995 in Geneva as part of the preparatory process for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-Term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, scheduled to be held in New York from 25 September to 6 October 1995. Fiscal policy experts from 8 least developed countries (Bangladesh, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Uganda, Zambia), representatives of the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Economic and Social Commission from Asia (ESCAP), and academicians participated in the meeting. The former Minister of Finance of Tunisia also participated. The list of participants is given in annex I of this report. Annex II contains a list of documents prepared for the Meeting.

2. In his **opening statement,** Mr H.A. Diallo, Director-in-Charge of the Division for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, drew attention to the effects of persistent fiscal deficits in many LDCs on their economic performance. The conjuncture in the 1980s of adverse commodity and capital markets and changing perceptions on the role of government and the increasing demand for private participation in economic development had driven reforms in the tax system in ways which would be more responsive to economic growth.

3. Tax systems then in place in many LDCs had displayed a number of remarkably similar characteristics which adversely affected resource mobilization and allocative efficiency. Heavy reliance on taxes on international trade coupled with an unrationalized and distortionary basis of rate differentiations, exemptions, and preferences, had resulted in a tax system which was inequitable in operation, difficult to administer and harmful to economic growth. Moreover, changing perceptions on the role of government and, in their wake, the increasing demand for private participation in economic development had lent urgency to reforms in the tax system in ways which would be more responsive to economic growth and emerging needs.

4. While there were significant inter-country variations in the design of reforms and treatment of specific issues, fiscal reforms in LDCs were similar in their broad orientations. In most countries, their initial objectives had been targeted on expenditure compression to restore macro-economic stability. On the revenue side, the main orientations were: expansion and diversification of the tax base away from international trade taxes in favour of more broadly based consumption or a modified version of the value added tax; elimination of the disincentive effects arising from onerous levels of taxation; reduction of the distortionary effects of differential taxation of different assets goods and sectors of the economy with the aim of encouraging domestic competition and improving incentives for private-sector activity and protection of vulnerable groups through non-regressive taxes. More recent reforms had concerned improvements in

administrative efficiency in revenue collection and the management and control of public expenditures.

5. Finally, he pointed to the differential needs and scope for tax reforms at the country level, taking into account specific country circumstances and initial conditions, implementation capacity, and socio-economic policies and priorities. Experts were invited to deliberate on a tax agenda for LDCs for the rest of the 1990s on such issues as options for broadening and deepening the tax base and, in particular, widening the application of the VAT; reducing the inequitable aspects of the fiscal systems; rationalizing customs and import tariff structures; strengthening implementation and enforcement capacity; and the adoption of poverty-sensitive approaches in restructuring expenditures.

I. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

6. The experts addressed wide-ranging fiscal issues on the basis of oral presentations and various papers, for example, "Tax structures in LDCs and the objectives of tax reforms", "Commodity taxation and the value added tax", "Raising public revenues in low-income countries; options and issues", "Budgetary crisis and revenue support for transitional developing economies: the case for Cambodia", "Public expenditure analysis", "Improving expenditure management and controls in low-income countries", "Poverty alleviation in a financing programming framework", and the "Sequencing of fiscal policy reforms with other macro-economic policy reforms" (ct; annex II). Several LDC participants provided information on their own country's experiences in carrying out different aspects of fiscal policy reforms.

A. General Issues in tax reforms

7. Some of the key areas for reforms in LDCs' tax systems highlighted by the experts were: the need to raise tax ratios; to broaden the tax base including diversification of the range of tax instruments away from trade taxes towards, *inter alia*, the value added tax (VAT) and other direct taxes such as income taxes; to improve stability in tax revenues while encouraging compliance. The latter includes such aspects as political commitment, reducing exemptions, improving the transparency of fiscal processes and strengthening of tax administration.

8. While, in theory, the design of tax systems should satisfy the criteria of elasticity, simplicity, equity and efficiency, fulfilment of all four criteria was a complex task and may be well beyond the design and implementation capacity of LDCs. At their present stage of economic development, priorities should perhaps be focused on achieving the objectives of elasticity and administrative simplicity. With regard to former, it was desirable for the tax system to aim at achieving dynamic elasticity; this approach would lead to the exploitation of new tax handles and growing sources of tax bases which would emerge with economic growth.

9. Concentration on the objectives of simplicity and elasticity in the design of tax systems does not necessarily interfere with the

ability to take into account equity considerations. This objective could be built into the tax system by the institution of progressive forms of taxation and priority expenditure allocations in sectors beneficial to vulnerable groups. Periodic assessments of revenue responses of various tax sources to changes in the economy would be helpful in assessing elasticity and in developing revenue forecasts.

B. Revenue reforms

10. Regarding the experiences of Asian LDCs in broadening the tax base, it was noted that the reforms had been more extensive with respect to indirect taxes than for indirect taxes, logically because of their disproportionately large contribution to total tax revenues in LDCs. Efforts to broaden the base of direct taxes in these countries had encompassed such measures as the reduction of exemptions, extension of the income tax net to a wider number of entities (eg. all wage earners), introduction of presumptive taxes on "hard-to-tax" groups (e.g. doctors, lawyers, small business establishments), reduction in the highest marginal tax rates, as well as the number of rate slabs.

11. Efforts to broaden the base of indirect taxes usually involved the introduction of VAT, extension of existing sales or turn-over tax to include additional goods and services, and imposition of new taxes along with reductions in the overall tax rates, especially in the case of import duties where rate reductions were accompanied by reductions in the dispersion of rates applicable to different import categories.

12. The strengthening of tax administration and enforcement through such measures as the withholding of tax at source, centralization and computerization of the tax collection system, and improving institutional capacity through staff training had also contributed to the broadening of the tax base in Asian LDCs.

13. The above measures had positive effects on tax buoyancy. Thus, five out of a sample of seven LDCs in the Asia-Pacific region (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Solomon Islands) managed to increase the average revenue (excluding foreign grants) to GDP ratio during the period 1990-1993 as compared to 1985-1989.

14. Political commitment, the integrity of governments, their authority in preventing the abuse of power and their ability to resist pressure groups were important considerations in the success of efforts to broaden the tax net and to raise revenues. Rationalization of rate structures and categories and reduction of exemptions were also singled out as relatively effective measures in raising revenues.

15. Questions were raised on how best to bring the rural/agricultural and informal sector into the tax net. The potential for capturing revenues from the rural sector was illustrated by the case of Mali where tax revenues from the sector contributed to only 2 per cent of GDP, which was negligible in comparison to the size of the sector's share in GDP of about 50 per cent. Similarly, it was acknowledged that

the informal sector represented considerable potential for raising revenues since incomes generated often exceeded those in the formal sector. To capture revenues from the latter source, LDCs such as Mali, for example, had begun to implement a series of taxes on imports of products used by the informal sector, as well as on sales of factories to retail outlets. These measures had facilitated the identification of potential taxpayers in the informal sector with commercial links to the State or its enterprises.

16. On the issue of taxing exports, it was acknowledged that many LDCs practised implicit taxation of exports through overvalued exchange rates. This implicit form of taxation was often more dominant than direct taxation of exports. While in general the rationale for export taxes was weak, there was a case for direct export taxes if there was a risk of natural resource depletion and if production was dominated by large concerns or multinationals which would otherwise escape taxes because of inadequate domestic income or corporate taxation systems. But whether such taxes were an effective means for taxing corporations would ultimately depend on the ability of the exporter to shift the incidence of tax. Increased globalization and competition, however, cautioned host governments to be pragmatic in the design of their tax and regulatory framework if they were to compete effectively for foreign investment.

17. Broadening the tax base had important implications for absorptive capacity in LDCs. Hence administrative and institutional reforms are necessary pre-conditions for underpinning tax reforms. Several participants expressed the view that, in situations of severe institutional constraints, it was preferable for the tax effort to concentrate on a relatively smaller range of taxes with good revenue potential rather than disperse collection efforts over a wider range of taxes which were beyond the authorities' capacity to administer and enforce effectively.

18. On the issue of privatizing tax collection, the general view was that many pragmatic difficulties stood in the way of effective privatization. Firstly, the benefit of potential rents extractable by private tax collectors would, in most cases, far outweigh any compensation package intended to deter them from corruption. Secondly, there was the risk that privatization into the hands of a private monopoly would perhaps pose greater risks to efficiency gains than those generated by public monopolies. Third, legal impediments stood in the way of privatization in some countries, such as Zambia whose constitution explicitly vests authority for tax collection in the Ministry of Finance. Privatization of pre-shipment inspection, for example through the Swiss Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) system, was thought by some experts to be quite helpful in preventing tax evasion and under-invoicing, but the costs were said to be quite prohibitive. In this connection, the proper motivation and adequate compensation of tax collectors/customs officials through bonuses and other incentive schemes were thought to be important in effective tax administration. But authorities had to be vigilant in determining when such schemes had outlived their usefulness and should be withdrawn.

C. Expenditure reforms

19. On the issue of expenditure reforms, the considerable efforts of several LDCs in containing expenditure through reform of public enterprises - including privatization, retrenchment of the civil service, reduction of fringe benefits and more rigorous screening of capital expenditure - was widely acknowledged. Citing the experiences of seven Asian LDCs, one speaker noted that the average annual growth of current expenditure during the period 1990-1993 was below the level attained in the 1985-1989 period in six out of the seven cases, the only exception being Maldives. With regard to capital expenditure, the average growth rate in the period 1990-1993 in four (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Maldives and Nepal) out of seven countries was lower than the average annual growth rate in current expenditure; for another three (Bhutan, Myanmar and Solomon Islands) the opposite held. Hence, the generalization that LDCs' success in containing public expenditure largely emanated from curtailment of capital expenditures, while it may be true for African LDCs, is not necessarily true for their counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region.

20. The structure of government expenditure had important medium and long-term implications for economic performance and national solvency and creditworthiness. A key issue is whether expenditure patterns were directed towards the strengthening of the productive base; this in turn had potential implications for the sustainability of tax revenues, government solvency and political stability. Changes in the structure of expenditures which reduced non-productive outlays in favour of increased productive investment in socio-economic infrastructure would have profound implications for medium and long-term national solvency, even though their short-term impact on the budget may be neutral. On the other hand, short-term budgetary improvements achieved through compression of productive expenditures or postponement of such vital investments as human capital formation would have negative implications for growth and national solvency, with potentially undermining effects on political stability. In this connection, it was acknowledged that the fragility of political and social systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, justified a minimum level of defence expenditures.

21. The need for greater rationalization of government expenditure allocations was emphasized. Privatization and other reforms aimed at improving the performance of parastatals and reducing their burden on State budgets were some alternatives for rationalizing State budgets. But such measures were hampered by the lack of a viable private sector in many LDCs and by the underdeveloped capital markets. Given the LDCs' low level of development and their vast needs for investment resources, the vital role of external assistance in underpinning reforms was underlined. However, global investment norms suggest that countries should aim at an investment ratio of 25 per cent of GDP for long-term economic viability. Prospects for attaining this level of investment would, however, hinge critically on stepping up domestic resource mobilization, since country experiences suggest that over the long term the contribution of external capital flows to investment programmes would, for most countries, not exceed 2-3 per cent of GDP.

22. Rationalizing the structure of expenditures, moreover, required a clear specification of objectives sector by sector and an assessment of what should constitute a reasonable cost for delivering essential services. Devising performance indicators was thought to be useful in providing warning signals to policy- makers on the need for fiscal intervention as, for example, when military expenditures exceed combined expenditures on health and education.

D. Some pre-conditions for the success of reforms

23. Reform success was predicated on such factors as initial conditions, political stability, the credibility of reforms influenced by such factors as their breadth and scope, policy compatibility and consistency, and the degree of internalization of policy measures. The timing and sequencing of policy changes was also thought to figure importantly in reform success. For example, premature moves to liberalize the capital account before full implementation of trade reforms had resulted in capital flight in some countries.

24. Strong political commitment, although essential, was not sufficient in itself to ensure the success of reforms in the fiscal system. Given weak implementation capacities in LDCs, institutional reforms must underpin reforms in the tax system.

25. Reforms would also need to take into account the absorptive capacity and specific circumstances of each country. For example, it would be unrealistic to attempt to impose property taxes in countries without the prior establishment of a detailed registry of properties. Similarly, for VAT to function effectively, it was necessary to lay the institutional groundwork in terms of sound accounting and invoicing systems. The quality in the design of each tax would also figure among the success factors in reform programmes. In this connection, the importance of monitoring reforms with a view to identifying and rectifying implementation problems was emphasized. In Cambodia, for example, a tax on the value of construction was found to be detrimental to investment and had had to be subsequently withdrawn.

26. A no less important factor in reform success was the quality of tax administration. In this connection, tax administration and enforcement should be concentrated on large tax payers and revenue sources. To the extent that reforms produced winners and losers, experts acknowledged the importance of public information and education in mobilizing support for reforms.

27. The role of external financing in hedging against policy reversals in the face of external shocks was also recognised as fundamental to reform success and durability.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

28. The following are the main conclusions and policy implications to emerge from the Expert Group Meeting:

A. General issues

(1) The Expert Group Meeting in the context of wide consensus on the desirability of market-oriented systems, examined the issue of fiscal policy reforms to promote economic growth and balance-of-payments adjustment in an acceptable manner. In recent years, several LDCs have made considerable efforts in implementing major tax revenue and expenditure reforms. The experts took into account the mixed results of such policy efforts, individual country circumstances and their differential needs for continuing tax reforms.

(2) It is not possible to lay down uniform prescriptions for reforms that will fit all countries in all circumstances. Components, timing and sequencing details will vary from country to country, depending upon the circumstances prevailing when the reforms are initiated, the preparations made and the implementation capability.

(3) It is, however, possible to discern some general principles which can help guide the reform process in general, and fiscal reforms in particular. But the success of these efforts is predicated on full political commitment and accountability of governments and transparency of fiscal processes.

(4) It is important to recognize at the outset that fiscal reforms are generally a component of a broader reform package. Typically this includes, *inter alia*, trade, exchange rates and other macro-economic and sectoral policy reforms. It is vital to recognize the links between different components of a reform programme to ensure policy consistency and compatibility.

(5) Fiscal adjustment involves both short-run and long-run objectives. Short-run objectives are essentially targeted at reduction of the budget deficit, containing inflation and attaining balance in the external accounts, to provide a stable foundation for longer-term reforms, as well as to gain credibility for the entire process.

B. Revenue tax

(6) In pursuing reforms aimed at revenue enhancement, the emphasis should be on sustainable reforms. Such reforms should in turn emphasize revenue productivity. A high elasticity of revenues is most desirable. The aim should be to develop dynamic elasticity where a simple and well administered tax system results in emerging or rapidly growing bases so as to raise the revenue ratio over time. Rather than rely on progressive tax systems to generate high elasticity, simple, flat rate (or less differentiated) tax systems including those which rely on dynamic growth in VAT bases and well motivated increases in administrative and collection efficiency may be preferable.

(7) In the short run, efforts should focus on improving administrative efficiency and exploiting more fully the existing tax base, for example by reducing exemptions and improving compliance (e.g. by improvements in the rate structure) while containing the growth of public expenditure.

(8) Experience has shown that short-run stabilization of the budget, and initial reforms to the tariff structure can be achieved without revenue depletion.

(9) Medium-term and long-term objectives of tax reform should be targeted at broadening the coverage of taxation and developing new tax handles, including the mobilization and well managed utilization of non-tax revenue sources such as those emanating from exploitation of natural resources. This will enhance stability by reducing dependence on trade taxes and increasing reliance on direct taxes and broader expenditure-based taxes. Experience has shown not only that these are more efficient instruments, but that they are essential to enhancing the elasticity of tax systems and less harmful to international competitiveness.

(10) Several criteria can be used in evaluating alternative tax handles, in particular elasticity, efficiency, equity and administrative simplicity. It is possible to use these criteria to inform choices between alternatives.

C. Expenditure/Outlays

(11) Medium and long-term objectives of expenditure reform should focus on the composition of government expenditures, not only in terms of the balance between current and development expenditure, but also among components of current expenditures, taking into account the objectives they are intended to serve. Experience has shown that development expenditure is usually more vulnerable than current expenditure to expenditure restraint.

D. Implementation and capacity building

(12) To be successful, reforms in general and tax reforms in particular must be appropriately underpinned by training and administrative support. With more complicated taxes such as VAT, this means making adequate provision for training and appropriate information prior to the tax reform. It also means that, as the tax is broadened in its coverage, training needs are realistically assessed and dealt with. The multilateral agencies have a key role to play in providing technical assistance. Additional external financial assistance would also be required to offset, particularly, the adverse effects of reforms on vulnerable groups in order to sustain political commitment to reforms. To assess the success of particular actions, countries need to devise selected performance indicators that reflect the effectiveness and efficiency of measures taken, the degree of compliance, and the impact on society.

(13) The Meeting emphasized the need for capacity-building and improving conditions of service so as to create efficient local

institutions for promoting and sustaining reforms.

E. Issues for research

(14) More research is needed on (a) macroeconomic framework of analysis which would provide better guidance on fiscal targets; (b) examination of optimal allocations of government expenditures; (c) development of dynamic revenue bases; (d) developing modalities of effective restructuring and motivation of administrations; (e) providing modalities for greater private sector participation; (f) desirable rules of thumbs or norms for guiding behaviour, especially of policy-makers.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Elections of officers

29. At its opening meeting on 16 March 1995, the Expert Group Meeting elected the following officers: Chairman: Mr James Mtonga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance (Zambia); Vice-Chairman-cum Rapporteur: Professor David Greenaway (University of Nottingham, United Kingdom).

B. Adoption of the agenda

30. The agenda was adopted at the opening meeting, as follows:

1. Opening of the Meeting, adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the Meeting
2. Main issues on fiscal policy reforms in LDCs
3. Presentation of country studies and experiences
4. Conclusions.

C. Conclusions, recommendations and report of the Meeting

31. A group was set up to prepare the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting. At its closing meeting, on 17 March 1995, the Expert Group Meeting adopted its conclusions for inclusion in the report on its session. (For the conclusions, see section II, para. 28 above).

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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    Member, National Board of Revenue
    Bangladesh

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16. Mr. Marcel VAN DER KOLK
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of the Netherlands
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17. Mr. Michael WARD
Principal Economist
World Bank
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18. UNCTAD secretariat
- Mr. R. Lawrence
- Mr. H.A. Diallo
- Mr. C.K. Patel
- Ms. S. Toh

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- Fiscal Policy Reform in the Least Developed Countries
  A secretariat Background Note (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.2/5)

- Poverty Alleviation in a Financing Programming Framework: An Integrated Approach (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.2/2)
  by **S.K. Chand and P. Shome**, Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund

- Commodity Taxation Including Value Added Tax: The Case of Bangladesh (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.2/3)
  by **Saiful Islam Khan**, Member National Board of Revenue (VAT), Bangladesh

- Budgetary Crisis and Revenue Support for Transitional Developing Economies: The Case of Cambodia (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.2/4)
  by **Michael Ward**, Principal Economist with the International Economics Department, World Bank

- The Fiscal Balance Act: the Conventional Perspective
  by **Michael Ward**

- Notes on Improving Expenditure Management and Controls in Low-Income Countries (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.2/6)
  by **James Kahoza**, Auditor General of Uganda

- A Note on Fiscal Policy Reforms in Asia-Pacific LDCs
  by **Azizul Islam**, Director, Development Research and Policy Analysis Division, ESCAP, Bangkok

- The Gambia's Experience with Tax Reform
  by **M.B. Njie**, Principal Economist and Head of Macroeconomic and Financial Analysis Unit, The Gambia

- Fiscal Stabilization and Economic Growth in LDCs
  by **Oladunjoye Fajana**, Economist with African Development Bank, Côte d'Ivoire

- Le développement des récettes publiques dans les pays à faible revenue
  A partir du cas du Cambodge
  by **Moncef Bel Haj Amor**, (Former Minister, Tunisia) Consultant, Banque Mondiale-PNUD-MDP

- Raisons historiques et principes généraux de la réforme fiscale au Cap-Vert
  by **Marcos Evangelista**, Directeur-Général des Impots du Gouvernement du Cap-Vert

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REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Niamey, Niger, 24-26 January 1995

GE.95-51292

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INTRODUCTION

Background and objectives of the Expert Group Meeting on Women in Development in the Least Developed Countries

1. In preparation for the High-level Mid-Term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, which the General Assembly has decided to hold from 26 September to 6 October 1995, UNCTAD organized an Expert Group Meeting on Women in Development in the Least Developed Countries, with the joint financial support of the Government of Norway, UNFPA and UNIFEM, and backstopped by the UNDP Office in Niamey, Niger. The Meeting was hosted by the Government of Niger and took place in Niamey from 24 to 26 January 1995. It was preceded by a one-day meeting of its Steering Committee on 23 January 1995.

2. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s specifies, *inter alia*, the need to adopt measures to mobilize and involve women fully as agents and beneficiaries of the development process and to strengthen their developmental role. In addition, the Programme stipulates that its follow-up at the global level should focus, as one of the five main elements, on monitoring in particular the involvement of women in its implementation. UNCTAD, which acts as the United Nations focal point for the global level follow-up of the Programme of Action, has taken into account in its analytical work the gender aspects of development in LDCs. The outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on Women in Development in the LDCs, which gathered experts and Ministers from LDCs, as well as experts from donor countries, key international organizations and non-governmental organizations, will constitute an input by UNCTAD to the World Summit for Social Development and to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and help to bring the LDCs' concerns to the attention of these major meetings.*/

Introductory statements

3. The Expert Group Meeting was chaired by H.E. Madam Mailalé Mariama, Minister for Social Development, Population and Promotion of Women of Niger. In her inaugural speech, Madam Mariama, on behalf of the President of the Republic and herself, welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the organizers for choosing Niger as the host country for the Meeting. She pointed out that this Meeting, which followed the Cairo Conference held in September 1994 and the Regional African Conference of Dakar held in November 1994, provided another valuable opportunity to discuss problems relating to women's role in development. This Meeting, which was part of the preparations for the Mid-term Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, would focus on policies and measures implemented in these countries and how they could contribute to the promotion of women's role both as agents and beneficiaries in the development process. She added that it would also provide inputs to the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Madam Mariama stated that Niger fully shared the concerns regarding women's situation in the LDCs and stressed the need to identify and implement measures which would allow a radical and sustainable change. She drew attention to two important issues: (i) the promotion of the role of women in the development of micro- and small-scale enterprises, and (ii) the role and functioning of women's organizations in LDCs.

4. Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Director-in-charge of the Division for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries (UNCTAD), underlined that, since the last high-level experts' meeting on the role of women in the development of the LDCs held in 1990, also in Niamey, the number of LDCs had increased from 42 to 48. This bore testimony to the poverty faced by an increasing number of countries; and within these countries, women were the most vulnerable and therefore the most disadvantaged population group. While some LDCs had been making efforts to promote women's role in development and had registered visible progress in giving girls access to

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*/ For the list of participants, see annex I.

education, health and employment, many others, because of weakening economic conditions, growing population and political and social upheavals, natural catastrophes and desertification, had to cope with deteriorating structures which were already very fragile. Thus, the female-male gaps were still wide. For instance, the female literacy rate was two-thirds that of males and, in some countries, the primary school enrolment ratio was one female to two males. In addition, women continued to live in a situation of "invisibility" even though they made a major contribution to the family and nation and they were consequently discriminated against in terms of access to the means of production and to support services. He noted that the Expert Group Meeting would consider the three main themes laid down by the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the 1990s regarding women's access to the social sector, women's participation in the productive sector and the mainstreaming of women's concerns in national development plans. He hoped that the Meeting would highlight the most urgent problems and the priority actions required, taking into account the political, cultural and economic contexts of each LDC. The modalities of implementation were important and on this point the Meeting could draw upon the successful experiences of some LDCs. He was sure that the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting would constitute a major contribution to bringing the concerns of women in the LDCs to the attention of intergovernmental meetings and major Conferences which would take place this year.

5. Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Resident Representative of UNDP, said that UNDP's interest coincided with the major concerns of the international community, namely the reduction of socio-economic inequalities between countries and between men and women. The World Conferences on Women held in Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi had led to a greater recognition of women as partners in development. However, national and international strategies, policies and programmes to promote their role in LDCs had been insufficient and hampered by economic crisis, deterioration of terms of trade, increasing debt burden, high population growth, environmental degradation and political unrest. In its own development approach, UNDP focused on sustainable human development, of which women had to be considered as a central element. He considered that the success of policies and programmes in favour of women depended first of all on the mobilization of national efforts , but the support of the international community was also indispensable. A realistic immediate goal that could be proposed to the international community would be to focus on programmes which aimed at bridging the gap between the very critical socio-economic situation of women in LDCs and that of women in other developing countries.

6. Statements were also made by the representatives of United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and FINNIDA.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Special priority areas in education

7. The Expert Group discussed priority areas in education, taking into account the work already carried out by the Expert Group Meeting on Gender, Education and Training (EDUC/1994/1, 14 October 1994) and the guidelines provided by the UNCTAD secretariat (UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/2 of 24 November 1994).

8. A general discussion was held on major constraints that face girls and women in the field of education in the LDCs represented. Reference was also made to the case study on Niger presented to the Meeting. Exchanges on success stories from the various countries followed, so as to widen the framework for recommending priority and practical areas of concern.

9. Recognizing that the education of women yields higher returns than that of men, Governments and communities should do everything possible to remove all the obstacles that women currently face. It has been acknowledged that women's education leads to reduced child and maternal mortality rates, improves family health, increases children's educational opportunities, contributes to better agricultural productivity and enhances general economic development. Secondly, it has to be realized that the education of women is not a special favour but a basic human right, even more so in the current wave of democratization. The causes of gender disparities in education are many but the Group picked out the following areas for urgent attention in LDCs.

1. Literacy training, mass education and non-formal education

10. It was agreed that this was an important aspect in view of the fact that a trained mother will also endeavour to see that her children are also trained and educated. Governments should therefore institute nation-wide literacy and other non-formal education programmes to cater for women who have not gone to school or have dropped out too early. The on-going programmes of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities should be supported by the State. Experience has shown (e.g. in Bangladesh the Expanded Programme for Child Immunization) that for greater outreach and effectiveness, government work should be complemented by NGO efforts. The example of Burkina Faso, where donor agencies are supporting an Association of Mothers of School Children to undergo literacy training, was cited. The non-formal system of education followed by Bangladesh is another successful example.

2. Primary education

11. The Expert Group placed emphasis on this sector in the belief that problems have to be solved at the roots.

12. The Government should make primary education compulsory for all. In this connection, the minimum age of entry should be flexible to accommodate the needs of late entrants. This will give boys and girls equal opportunities to attend school.

13. The Government should make local schools more accessible for girls, as parents are reluctant to let them go to a distant or unsafe environment. More schools should be established where needed and/or dormitories provided.

14. An all-round school curriculum should be followed, without demarcation of which subjects are intended for either gender. Environmental and reproductive health and nutrition issues should specifically be addressed. In addition the curriculum should have a practical and vocational component to enable girls and boys to earn a living. Niger's experience, where both boys and girls take home-economics classes, was cited. It is the Government's responsibility to initiate changes in the curriculum, working with all stake-holders such as representatives of the community and NGOs.

15. Family life education should be introduced in schools to acquaint girls and boys with the facts of life at an early age. Again, the Government should act with stake-holders.

3. Technical training for women

16. Since women are grossly under-represented in this sector, urgent attention is required to change this state of affairs.

17. It was felt that the provision of the same curriculum at lower levels would initiate girls into the non-traditional fields.

18. Career guidance and counselling at school level should be carried out to attract girls to the technical sector.

19. Technical and vocational education should be linked to employment and lead to marketable skills.

20. The general education available limits girls' opportunities for employment. Therefore, methods should be devised to make science and mathematics attractive to girls, since these are prerequisites to technical education.

4. General recommendations to ensure increased participation of women in education

21. Women's education being a profitable investment, the Government should ensure that at least 20 per cent of its development budget is spent on the social sector. In addition, commitment should be made to cancel or at least delay the repayment of external debts, so as to allow increased national expenditure in the social sector.

22. The Government should provide incentives aimed at attracting girls into school and retaining them there. These schemes must be instituted according to local situations. Examples include scholarships for girls, provision of uniforms and food items. Other measures could include involving mothers in income-generating activities, devising labour-saving schemes to reduce women's work-load, and distributing housework between boys and girls to allow girls to stay in school longer.

23. Awareness of the value of educating women and girls should be raised through a widespread use of electronic and print media. Information will enhance work already being done by NGOs and the Government.

24. Deliberate training and recruitment of female teachers will attract more girls into the schools. The Government should also ensure that more women are appointed to positions of authority in the educational sector.

25. Monitoring of all these measures should be the responsibility of the communities at local levels and of the State at the national level.

26. There was a suggestion that the mother tongue be used at the lower levels of primary education in order to give children a sense of social belonging. However, views were divided on this issue since the dominance of a foreign language at primary level was not a constraint that was common to all LDCs.

27. Elimination of sexual harassment of girls was mentioned, although no concrete strategy was proposed.

B. Special priority areas in population and health

28. The Expert Group recognized that, in general, population and health programmes in LDCs have paid more attention to population and fertility control than to women's health. Discussions were held in a broader context and centred on problems and opportunities of women in LDCs, because some issues (such as female genital-mutilation) are region-specific. The entry of women into the

labour market has been primarily induced by poverty, and women continue to lag behind in all the other areas of social development (especially health, nutrition and maternal mortality). In some countries (such as Bangladesh and Nepal), women have a lower life expectancy than do men. The Group also discussed examples of models used in countries such as Nepal, Niger, Bangladesh, and Lao People's Democratic Republic, in which health-care delivery systems work with varying degrees of success. Illiteracy in general, and lack of information on women's and children's health issues in particular, were identified as a major constraint. The Expert Group expressed concern at recent budget cuts and low allocation of resources for the health sector, and the fact that conditions for women and children are worsening in many LDCs.

29. The causes of disparities in health care are many, but the Expert Group selected the following areas for urgent attention in the LDCs.

1. Population policies and family planning

30. Access to health is a human right for women as well as for men and should be protected and promoted. Women should be able to exercise their reproductive rights and have access to safe and effective methods for regulating fertility. Early marriage of girls in many LDCs is a major concern. Access to education for men and women, especially about family planning, was suggested as one way to mitigate this problem. Governments need to recognize the problem and to pass and enforce corrective legislation.

2. Mother and child health

31. The high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity, and infant mortality rates, often result from a lack of basic health services or awareness of the availability of these services. Conveniently located, accessible, well-equipped and affordable health care centres need to reach the rural as well as the urban poor. Adequate training in basic health care and hygiene should be given at the community level, and must involve community leaders, among others. Training courses should take into account women's different roles and responsibilities, the demands on their time, and socio-economic and cultural differences among LDCs. The role of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) as promoters of safe motherhood must be recognized. Existing TBAs should be identified and trained in safe and sanitary birthing practices, and additional ones recruited and trained.

3. Nutrition

32. In a poor family with limited resources, a nutritional bias is apparent against women and children, particularly girl children. The Expert Group recommended that projects on nutrition-related issues such as homestead gardening, and awareness of diseases due to nutritional deficiencies, should be implemented at the community level with the help of female volunteers, community leaders and NGOs.

33. In order to provide support from health services, the number of midwives should be increased and adequately trained. These midwives should provide education and information about pregnancy, child birth and infant nutrition.

4. Harmful traditional practices

34. The Expert Group emphasized the importance of organizing public health and educational campaigns, with the help of women's pressure groups and NGOs, among men and women which would discourage harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and nutritional taboos.

35. There is value in traditional medicine and traditional healers and they should be maintained and used adequately for the benefit of women - for example, through mainstreaming and streamlining with other forms of modern medicine.

5. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)

36. Information campaigns on HIV and STD transmission among men and women need to be designed and their outreach broadened.

37. Dissemination of specific information about AIDS and STD among school pupils is urgently required.

38. In addition to the specific recommendations appearing under each sub-category above, *general recommendations* of the Expert group are the following.

39. Health services should be brought closer to rural and urban people. This can be done through an increase in the number of health-care centres and the quality of their service delivery in both rural and urban locations. Also, health-care centres must place special emphasis on women and children's health. International organizations such as UNICEF can assist communities to promote access to health services.

40. Use should be made of electronic and print media to disseminate information on population and health issues, especially addressing the needs of women and children.

41. LDCs, if they have not done so, should adopt and implement the Cairo Plan of Action, paying special attention to the situation in their own country, especially in areas such as mother and child health, family planning, nutrition, and better organization and management of health care.

42. Governments must increase the budget allocations for health services, including family planning programmes.

C. Special priority areas on violence against women and women as refugees

1. Violence against women

43. In discussing violence against women, the Expert Group looked at various issues that perpetuate and encourage the violence meted out to women. Domestic violence, it was agreed, was prevalent but not widely acknowledged because most of it was not reported or recorded.

44. Harmful traditional beliefs linked to religious practice were seen as tools used by men to perpetuate violence against women. Participants cited examples of how religions were misinterpreted by men to abuse their wives.

45. Family laws were also cited - especially those which enable the husband to take another wife, to divorce a woman - as perpetuating violence against women. Such family laws, which again are often discreetly linked to religion, subject women to abuses because they are seen as men's property.

46. The Expert Group took the view that intolerance towards women had been and was still conducive to violence against women, and could often lead to women and children being raped and killed.

47. Women's rights were also violated when they could not express themselves through dress or art and when they could not develop their talents.

48. Women faced other forms of violence such as rape or were forced into prostitution and child trafficking for money. Rape and prostitution were damaging to the health of women, especially since they ran the risk of acquiring the HIV virus.

49. The Expert Group, however, identified ignorance among women, lack of information, the misinterpretation of laws and regulations, and the high rates of illiteracy as some of the factors contributing to women's rights being

violated. Because women were ignorant of the laws they could not rely upon them for protection in their marriages and in their lives as citizens.

50. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted at the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, in recognition of the fact that violence against women and girls was a violation of their human rights and derived from the low status of women in the society, and also that the lack of laws prohibiting violence and inadequate measures to enforce the existing laws, as well as lack of education, had encouraged the perpetration of violence against women.

51. The following *recommendations* are some of the strategies and measures that could be adopted to ensure that violence against women is eradicated.

52. Governments should ratify the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted at the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

53. Laws must be enacted and enforced. If necessary, additional laws must come into force to prevent violence against women. The donor community could exert pressure on Governments to observe and implement the laws which they have ratified.

54. Women's groups and NGOs should lobby and exert pressure by publicizing violence against women.

55. Adopting a policy for the promotion of women should be compulsory in every LDC. There is a need to ensure that the policy is implemented where it already exists. Women NGOs here again can put pressure on the Government to ensure it adheres to its political will to enact legislation and implement the policies which have been adopted. Women in general should stand as one group against violence and must work with women Ministers to ensure that their cause is fulfilled.

56. General education (formal and non-formal) and legal education should be made available to all women. Women should be made aware of the problems and should be encouraged to take part in committees and to go to legal advice bureaux, as well as to seek assistance whenever they are abused.

57. Committees should be established at the community level and above. Here, an example was given from Bangladesh where such committees have been formed at every level of the society; these committees in return report to an inter-Ministerial committee each month which is chaired by the Prime Minister.

58. Women assistant superintendents and more female police officers should be appointed to facilitate the filing of cases by women.

59. Courts for women, as in Cameroon, should be set up to ensure that cases of violence against women can be brought to court and be dealt with quickly.

60. Dialogue between men and women should be encouraged, so that what is not acceptable and beneficial to women can be tabled and discussed by both sexes. The example of Niger's Family Code was given, where a draft code of 1975, which contained 905 articles, was still not approved.

61. Shelters must be established to provide a refuge for women who have been beaten or physically mistreated. Such shelters should be available to women of all social strata.

2. <u>Women as refugees</u>

62. The issues raised in relation to women as refugees were seen in terms of both the displaced persons themselves and the pressure that they place on host countries, which are often poor and have other internal problems.

63. It is a fact that most refugees are women and children. Since they are less mobile and have restricted options, it is they who are concentrated in refugee camps, where they remain insecure and vulnerable to rape and abuse.

64. Recognizing the fact that the majority of refugees are women and that they bear disproportionately the brunt of wars and civil strife, it is imperative that they be involved in preventing war and in conflict resolution. Emphasis was also placed on the fact that women were the major supporters of families and this again was seen as one more reason why they should be involved in decision-making, since wars and strife and refugee status all combine to make it more difficult for women to support their families and keep them together.

65. The Expert Group recognized that opportunities are provided in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and in other laws to protect women, but that other problems remain. In particular, the problem of integration of refugees into the host communities was cited. This is a major problem and needs negotiation between host countries, UNHCR and the refugees. The problem of integration is complex and the Expert Group was not able to make specific recommendations on this. However, since most refugees located in host countries nurse the hope of going back to their own countries, it was recommended that host countries also help the war-torn countries to speed up the process of peace and reconciliation.

66. In providing assistance to refugees, women's special needs should be considered, in particular women's health and hygiene needs. Women should be involved and should participate in the routine management of the camps. For example, when food rations are given out, men should receive these food rations only in the presence of their families to ensure that the rations are not sold but consumed by the family.

67. To avert war and to establish a peaceful world, there is need for an education (formal, informal and within the family) that will inculcate in children the values of peace, tolerance, understanding and dialogue. Education of this kind is fundamental to achieving long-lasting peace.

68. Counselling services should be given to refugees to assist them to integrate with the host communities and societies. Their professional qualifications, experience and skills should be put to the use of the community that they join. This would also be done taking into account women's special needs, skills and capabilities. The counselling should assist the refugees in identifying their capabilities and skills and put them at the service of others.

69. The Expert Group concluded with two *general recommendations* for the social sector as a whole, namely: (i) that financial resources be increased and made available through debt conversion and or debt swap; and (ii) that resource management capabilities be strengthened. This should be done in order to overcome past mistakes that were due either to lack of will or to the fact that managers were not trained and could not, therefore, benefit fully from the technology transfer. Accountability for financial resources would be acquired through monitoring, tracking, evaluating and adjusting with a view to measuring progress both quantitatively and qualitatively. This process should be built into all specific policies and measures from the community level upwards.

D. Participation of women in the productive sector

70. The Expert Group considered two major areas of the productive sector, namely: (i) agriculture, natural resources and the environment and sustainable development; (ii) the informal sector, and small, medium-size and large enterprises.

71. The Expert Group recognized the numerical strength of women and their crucial roles in production, in child bearing and in the community, stressing that the last two roles were not duly recognized or remunerated. Although women made up 50 per cent of the LDCs' population and constituted a vital resource in the rural and urban economies of these countries, development policies continued

to address their needs and concerns inadequately. Women continued to face difficulties in their access to factors of production, employment, and institutional support services. There were still insufficient affirmative measures taken in favour of women, and even when decisions were taken in their favour, there was little or no application.

72. The Expert Group came to the conclusion that major policy reversals were necessary to put women at the top of the development agenda.

73. It found that the same problems kept surfacing over and over again, indicating that little or no progress had occurred over the past years.

74. The fact that structural adjustment programmes and other socio-economic policies and reforms did not take cognizance of the special circumstances and needs of women has often resulted in the further marginalization of women.

75. In reviewing the sectors, the Expert Group drew up recommendations on required productive resources (e.g. development of fertile land, technology, credit, and other inputs) and institutional support services such as extension and training, domestic labour-saving devices as well as other support services such as education, health facilities, water and sanitation, day-care centres, and gender distribution of labour at the household level. The Expert Group recognized that the involvement of women in the productive sectors of LDC economies will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of these sectors. It urged Governments to take advantage of the indigenous technical expertise and acumen of women in business and management which, if tapped and developed, would enhance LDC economies.

76. The Expert Group emphasized the need for women to move from the informal (backyard, small-scale and micro level) to formal, medium- and large-scale industries and business, to allow women to play their role efficiently in bigger markets, thus benefiting from economies of scale.

77. The Expert Group also felt that LDC Governments should increase their commitments and take affirmative actions in favour of women, and that they should move from rhetoric to reality and action, and from planning to actual implementation of gender and development programmes.

78. In conclusion, the Expert Group gave serious consideration to redressing gender discrimination such as inequalities of access to resources by women in the productive sector, feminization of poverty, and the continued dependency of women which tends to reinforce the low socio-economic status of women in the LDCs.

79. In view of the above, the Expert Group agreed on the following concrete *recommendations* and forward-looking strategies to bring women to the desired level.

80. Women, Governments, society at large, donor agencies and the international community should make deliberate efforts and take affirmative action in enabling women in the productive sector to gain access to the required productive resources and institutional support services in agriculture, natural resources, environment and the informal and other business sectors where women have comparative advantage.

81. Governments and the international community should seriously review their policies and programmes which negatively impact on the productive sectors of the LDCs and should provide an enabling policy environment and legislative framework to ensure favourable terms of trade, compensatory strategies, debt cancellations and redirection of resources to the social sector and women in development.

82. Gender focal points should be established at all crucial decision-making levels in the productive sector of LDCs to ensure that gender concerns are adequately addressed and reflected.

83. The international community should make special efforts and undertake commitments to allocate adequate financial, managerial and technical resources to the development and expansion of the productive sector of LDCs, with increased women's participation.

84. Women, Governments and the international community should support networking between women agriculturalists and entrepreneurs in LDCs on the one hand, and women in these sectors with their partners in the developed world on the other. This networking can take the form of study tours, exchange of information, training attachments, participation in trade fairs and promotion of trade.

85. Governments, communities and individuals are strongly urged to take into consideration the environmental implications of productive sector activities in the LDCs, thus ensuring the implementation of environmental-friendly development programmes for sustainable development.

86. Moreover, the following *specific measures* were identified by the Expert Group, after a detailed exchange of views, as being of key importance in the promotion of women's participation in the productive sector.

1. Agriculture, natural resources and the environment and sustainable development

87. A first set of measures concerned access to use of fertile land and improved land schemes, including: (i) the enforcement of existing legislation in favour of women (the responsibility for ensuring this should lie with Governments and women's groups); (ii) the dissemination of information, education and communication, in which the government, women's organizations and the media would play a key role; (iii) the introduction of legal measures and reforms which would eliminate contradiction between customary, religious and statutory laws (women members of law reform commissions should take an active part); (iv) the networking of women's organizations, lawyers, male and female religious leaders and scholars; and (vi) the promotion of networking by women lawyers and their involvement as members of land commissions.

88. As regards measures to ensure that women derive benefits of their labour on the land, the Expert Group recommended: (i) to encourage women's rural organizations to act as pressure groups; (ii) to promote research on improving land fertility in different LDCs and facilitating women's access to improved land; (iii) to undertake action-oriented research on experiences of women benefiting from the fruits of their labour and wide dissemination of the findings; (iv) to organize vocational and professional training for economic solvency and independence; (v) to lease land to women's organizations for 99 years or more; and (vi) to integrate women into existing market structures and into decision-making commercial groups.

89. In respect of women's access to credit, there was a need for: (i) enhancing women's access to credit through expansion of all forms of credit facilities and opportunities for women such as village banks, Women's World Banking, local banking schemes etc.; (ii) simplifying procedures and creating favourable conditions for a better access to credit by low-income women; (iii) exploring and implementing innovative and traditional guarantee systems based on group pressure and good repayment track records, including rotating credit associations; and (iv) disseminating information by financial institutions on credit availability to women.

90. Women's access to and control of domestic and agricultural technology and inputs should be facilitated through: (i) the promotion of South-South study tours and schemes to expose women farmers to appropriate technologies and sharing information on these technologies; and (ii) the provision of appropriate and/or accessible extension services.

91. In order for women to cope with infrastructural problems and to facilitate their access to markets, Governments should provide the required infrastructural support and services such as good road network and transport and access to

markets. Other measures included: (i) improving storage facilities of agricultural produce (e.g. processing, conservation and marketing facilities); (ii) encouraging women traders and entrepreneurs to participate in the importation and exportation of agricultural produce; (iii) promoting the consumption of locally-produced foods and improving their quality and competitiveness; and (iv) promoting intra-African exchanges, and South-South and regional co-operation through the improvement of transportation, communication, trade, as well as easing of trade barriers and reduction of border harassment.

92. The Expert Group also discussed women's role in environmental preservation, in particular in combatting desertification and drought. The following measures were suggested: (i) establishing and promoting women's organization's for environmental protection and ensuring that they benefit from such efforts (such as in Niger); (ii) promoting the creation of NGOs around environmental issues such as recycling of plastic products; the NGOs should employ mostly the disabled women and the young (as was done in Niger); (iii) promoting and subsidizing the use of alternative and improved sources of energy, such as solar, biogas, butane gas, improved stoves, etc. (such as in Niger, in The Gambia, and in the United Republic of Tanzania) and the Ministry for Energy should assume the responsibility for the implementation; (iv) expanding green areas through the promotion of tree planting activities among women's groups (such as in Niger, in The Gambia and in the United Republic of Tanzania); the Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture, as well as women's NGOs could play an active part in this; and (v) integrating women in the decision-making and strategic planning process at international, national and community levels; the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Planning should help to ensure that this is implemented.

93. In connection with the problems of pollution, proposed measures included: (i) involving women in promotional campaigns and legislation against the dumping of hazardous and industrial wastes in African and other LDCs, and women's NGOs could contribute to this; (ii) promoting environmental-friendly forms of tourism, such as eco-tourism, and discouraging environmentally destructive forms of tourism (e.g. haphazard trash dumping), for which the responsibility would fall principally on the Ministries of Tourism and Environment/Lands; (iii) establishing and enhancing women's organizations and NGOs to act as pressure groups for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Rio Programme of Action, and all related conventions and legislation, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGOs could play a major role; (iv) establishing water treatment plants and recycling activities involving women and the Ministry of Environment to take responsibility for the implementation; (v) promoting waste disposal and sanitation activities involving women's groups and domestic waste disposal and compost treatment for agricultural use; promoting education on separation of bio-degradable and non bio-degradable waste (such as in Bangladesh, in The Gambia, in Niger, in Sierra Leone, and in the United Republic of Tanzania); the Ministries of Health and Environment would have to play the key role in this; (vi) establishing and promoting small-scale enterprises involving transformation of environmental waste into recyclable items; (vii) involving women in the prevention and reduction of pollution and toxicity at home and in the work place; the Ministries of Environment, Industry and Handicrafts could contribute to this; and (viii) promoting public awareness, sensitization among women and the society at large (such as in Bangladesh); NGOs, Ministries of Environment and Women and the media should take an active part.

94. The Expert Group stressed the need to mobilize adequate resources to implement the above measures, both as regards mobilizing funds and augmenting financial resources for women's participation in environmental protection and for the implementation of Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 at all levels (the Ministries of Finance, Planning, Economic Affairs and women's groups should take an active part), and as regards mobilizing local communities, especially women, for protection and sustainability of the environment, and for fund-raising (such as in Bangladesh and in The Gambia). NGOs, the Ministries of Environment and Women's Affairs should take a major role in this.

95. The Expert Group also underlined that often the lack of follow-up to decisions and recommendations has been a major constraint to the effective

advancement of women. It therefore called for the adoption of the following strategies for effective implementation: (i) establishing, monitoring and evaluating follow-up mechanisms with the participation of women and the civil society (Organizations like UNCTAD and the Ministries for Women's Affairs and Planning were called upon to contribute to this); (ii) identifying specific Ministries as key actors in implementation, with the Ministry of Planning taking the lead in this; (iii) the inclusion of women in follow-up committees at local, national and international levels. (UNCTAD and the Ministry of Women's Affairs were called upon to contribute to this): (iv) establishing national women's Ministries and bureaux, and networking with women's groups to promote gender-sensitive and sustainable development as well as poverty alleviation; (v) information and dissemination at all levels including on research findings (the Ministries for Women's Affairs, Environment Planning and NGOs should undertake this responsibility); (vi) ensuring adequate mobilization and commitment of resources by Governments, local communities, the international community and donor agencies (the Ministry of Finance, women's organizations, the United Nations and United Nations specialized agencies, employment/financial institutions should help to ensure this).

2. The informal sector and micro-, small-scale and medium-size enterprises

96. The Expert Group emphasized the key role of training and information which could enhance women's participation in the enterprise sector and in the informal and formal sectors. The strategies in this respect would include: (i) enhancing women's skills in the technical, entrepreneurial and managerial fields, through study tours, trade fairs and exchange programmes (with the Chambers of Commerce, trade and women's associations as well as donors as main actors); (ii) providing advisory services, information on enterprise development and business opportunities for women (involving the Chambers of Commerce, trade and women's associations and the media); (iii) reducing women's workload through the provision of labour-saving devices, easier access to water and fuel, and equitable gender division of labour in the home sphere; (iv) changing the socialization patterns of youth, starting at a very early age to promote greater gender equity at home, in the school and through the media; (v) enforcing the International Labour Office (ILO) child labour laws to protect children's work in the informal sector, especially of females (with monitoring of implementation by the ILO, NGOs, women's organizations, and the Government); (vi) encouraging diversification of production in the informal sector by promoting creativity, innovation and pilot schemes (the Chambers of Commerce, women entrepreneurs and trade associations should play a major role); and (vii) promoting businesswomen's partnerships, networking and joint ventures between South-South and North-South (the Chambers of Commerce, associations of businesswomen, companies and donors should take an active part).

97. The Expert Group further stressed the need to increase women's access to credit facilities through counselling, and dissemination of information to women and women's groups. Women's organizations, Ministries of Finance, NGOs, banks and donors should all be involved.

98. Finally, emphasis was placed by the Expert Group on the creation by Governments of an enabling policy environment for the informal sector. Key measures included: (i) encouraging and facilitating the transition of women into the formal sector and providing an adequate, fair and safe working environment and training skills in this sector; (ii) revitalizing institutional structures which support the informal sector (the Ministries and private sector should undertake this responsibility); (iii) including women's concerns in structural adjustment programmes and where possible participation of women in such negotiations and decision making (the Ministry of Planning, NGOs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank have a major responsibility to ensure that this is implemented); (iv) encouraging women's organizations to lobby their governments to ensure an equitable and favourable treatment for women in all development programmes.

E. Special priority areas in the incorporation of women's concerns in mainstream development

99. The Expert Group agreed on the following working procedures: identifying the constraints, making observations and, accordingly, recommendations.

1. National development plans, programmes and strategies

100. It was observed that urban women benefit more from the development plans at the expense of rural women, who are in the majority. It was therefore recommended that, in future, focus should be placed on the majority.

101. It was further observed that national development plans rarely take account of the specific needs of women. In order to avoid one group being marginalized, a gender-oriented planning system should be made compulsory. In this connection the Ugandan example of gender-oriented policy planning was cited. The Women in Development department had been working with teams from sectoral Ministries to evaluate current plans, identify gender gaps and recommend appropriate policies which incorporate gender. In most cases this procedure started with seminars on gender sensitization for planners. In addition, the key Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning had worked out its own gender-oriented planning policy which had enabled it to detect whether other Ministries have incorporated the gender aspect into their plans.

102. It was therefore recommended that: (i) a gender-oriented policy should be made a conditionality in national plans; (ii) there should be a gender sensitization exercise for all personnel involved in planning; (iii) women should be included in official planning units and involved in the planning process and be given training in planning techniques; (iv) training courses in management should be designed to increase the numbers of women qualified in this sector (for example,the existing wide pool of experienced secretaries could be trained and drawn into this sector); (v) deliberate efforts should be made to place women into decision- making positions (Here, the Government's political will is a prerequisite; it is also necessary to have a statistical picture of levels and numbers of women at the policy-making levels); (vi) Governments should endeavour to increase women's participation in politics; at the same time the women themselves should mobilize support and vote for women candidates; (vii) in order to involve the majority of women, the Governments and the women themselves should make efforts to increase the numbers of women in strategic decision-making positions at the community and local government levels.

2. National machinery for women at the ministerial level

103. It was observed that the national machinery lacked adequate financial, technical and human resources. This reduced its effectiveness. It was also observed that loopholes still existed in the coordination of various interventions. In addition, linkages between ministerial and grassroots groups/levels were lacking.

104. In view of the above, the following measures were recommended: (i) a commitment by governments should be made to ensure availability of the mentioned resources (financial, technical and human); (ii) national machinery for women within the government structure should be at a high level; (iii) strong WID focal points should be established in Ministries with the capacity to take decisions; (iv) the Government should ensure better coordination of various interventions on the support and advancement of women's concerns; a decentralized structure was recommended to ensure that adequate attention would be given to the grassroots level; (v) machinery for women should work with NGOs and other women's groups to ensure effective coordination; (vi) such machinery should regularly disseminate information about its activities to the general public; and (vii) there should be monitoring and evaluation of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

3. Systematic collection, compilation and analysis of gender-sensitive statistics

105. The Expert Group observed that data differentiated by gender were not available in some LDCs and, where they were available, they were often not segregated and rarely analysed. This type of data is essential if the analysis of women's situation and needs is to be tackled in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

106. The following recommendations were therefore made: (i) Governments of LDCs should take the issue of data collection seriously; data banks on gender should be established where they do not yet exist. As a matter of practice all data should be gender disaggregated; (ii) special methodologies of collection of data which include women should be devised and followed (e.g. estimation of work carried out in households, farms and extension work); (iv)all agencies involved in data collection should ensure proper analysis in order to achieve full utilization; and (iv) Governments should activate existing structures to make them operational so that they can collect, analyse and disseminate data with emphasis on women's socio-economic contribution and status.

4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and legal aid, legal literacy and legal measures for protecting and promoting the rights of women

107. The Expert Group observed that some LDCs have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Among those countries that had ratified the Convention, many had neither publicized nor implemented its provisions fully. Furthermore, both men and women are unaware of the various rights under the Convention. Very often the decision-makers posed a stumbling block in the implementation process. To make matters worse, several conflicting laws exist while law-makers do not always take account of the local environment or traditional practices.

108. The following recommendations were therefore made: (i) all governments which have not ratified CEDAW should do so, and all those that have done so may wish to initiate relevant implementation procedures; (ii) programmes on legal literacy and awareness concerning CEDAW and women's rights should be carried out specifically for women and also for the general public; legal aid centres, mobile legal aid clinics down to village levels and the training of para-legal personnel, where feasible, should be instituted (this would be a duty for official mechanisms, women's groups and legal professional bodies); (iii) laws governing domestic relations should be reformed and, where they do not exist, they should be enacted so that all conflicting issues can be eliminated (e.g in the inheritance issue); and (iv) in the process of enacting or reforming laws, a participatory approach should be used so as to take into account the needs, perceptions, traditions and practices of the people. This would ensure greater acceptance of the changes.

5. The role and functioning of women's associations and organizations in the LDCs: current policies, strategies, major constraints and opportunities

109. The Expert Group observed that women's organizations were important in fighting poverty, raising awareness in terms of research, and taking into account the problems of women. It recognized the importance of disseminating information on legislation concerning women, as well as the need for improved coordination, and more interaction among women's groups and other developmental institutions. The Expert Group also emphasized training for women and women's groups.

110. The following recommendations were suggested: (i) to establish umbrella bodies, where they do not exist, to coordinate all women's associations and NGOs; (ii) to form co-operative associations where they do not exist; (iii) to establish networking channels among women's associations for better flow of information and exchange of experience at local, regional and international levels; (iv) to strengthen institutional capacities of women's NGOs and associations through training and procurement of financial support; (v) to intensify research into a new approach which takes into account issues of special concern to women, such as appropriate methodology in the collection of gender-

oriented statistics; (vi) women's organizations should endeavour to initiate self-sustaining, income-generating activities; (vii) women's organizations should design training courses, to provide managerial skills, and to explain financial procedures, including information on donor requirements; (viii) women's NGOs should endeavour to understand structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and disseminate information about them to the communities with the aim of devising ways of reducing the negative effects of SAPs; (ix) Governments should always involve women in all activities and women's groups should ensure that this is done; and (x) the Expert Group felt that it was important to utilize national expertise first and foremost instead of relying on outside personnel who may not fully appreciate the local environment and may not ensure continuity.

111. An *overall recommendations* was for women to use pressure groups to achieve changes in respect of all the above.

F. Special priority area on international support

112. The Expert Group considered the following in their discussions, namely: (i) the role of development partners at the national and international level; the latter included the organizations of United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors, development financing institutions, international NGOs, and other multilateral organizations; and (ii) the types of support required, including possible targets to be set for the social development sector, productive sector, and mainstreaming of gender issues.

113. The Expert Group decided that any project should be within the framework of governmental policy and should meet the objectives of development planning policy. It held the view that the main actors at the national level should encompass: Ministries of Finance and Planning; sectoral/or technical Ministries; the private sector; civil organizations at the local level, and national NGOs. The main actors at the national level would vary depending on the types of support given. The *specific recommendations* of the Expert Group are set out below.

114. The project should be part of government policy. After being approved by the Government, development aid procedures should be simplified to facilitate direct contact between NGOs and donors. National partners should coordinate their activity in order to achieve sustainability and avoid duplication. To facilitate coordination on NGOs' activities at the national level, an umbrella NGO organization might be established to co-ordinate development activities with the Government.

115. The traditional government-to-government development co-operation must be complemented by new ways and means of support, with direct support to the NGOs, especially the women's NGOs.

116. The Government, especially the national mechanisms for the advancement of women, with adequate technical and financial support from donors, should organize special training for women's NGOs on how to identify needs and prepare and submit project proposals. Simultaneously, the application procedures should be simplified.

117. Both the donor and the recipient community should incorporate a gender approach in the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of development programmes.The international support agencies should make political commitment to mainstream gender issues in development assistance. The relevant institutional adjustments should be performed. LDC Governments should apply a gender-sensitive approach to planning, implementation and evaluation to all national development programmes, including the identification of human and physical resources directed to benefit women. Both the donor and the recipient sides should provide training in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming for the personnel at all levels and evaluate their performance in terms of responsiveness to the issues.

118. Prior to any decision to allocate resources for any development programme, a gender impact analysis should be performed. It should be considered as the necessary requirement for any type of support.

119. International development cooperation should encompass the various types of assistance, such as technical, financial, and institutional support at different levels. Special emphasis should be given to the institutional strengthening, especially at the grassroots level.

120. To achieve the efficient use of the allocated resources in the LDCs, the procedures of development assistance should be simplified. In this respect, the international support agencies should apply flexibility and address the issues of accountability, transparency and management of resources.

121. There is growing consensus to support the 20-20 concept which implies that the donor community should allocate a minimum of 20 per cent of their development assistance and the recipient countries should allocate 20 per cent of their budget to social expenditures such as education, health care, food security and nutrition. Both partners should commit themselves to meet this target, with special focus on women.

122. Among the developing countries, the LDCs and the landlocked countries are those with the least financial resources and they thus often face special difficulties in complying with the rigid conditions of the international support agencies, such as the required share of the country's own investment towards programme costs. The international support agencies should apply more flexible conditions for LDCs concerning development assistance procedures. This is of crucial importance for programmes targeted to women.

123. The structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and the World Bank should incorporate the gender dimension to enable one to assess the impact of these programmes on women.

124. International support agencies should apply the principle that all development programmes must be demand-driven. In order to achieve this, the development programmes should be based on both the LDCs' and donors' priorities and mutual understanding.

125. Donors' coordination should be strengthened and information of donors' different priorities should be efficiently disseminated (e.g. by means of leaflets) at the local level by the agency which is coordinating donors' actions.

II. DECLARATION

126. At its closing session on 26 January 1995, the Expert Group Meeting adopted the following Declaration:

1. We, the participants at the Meeting on Women in Development in the Least Developed Countries attended by experts and Ministers in Niamey (Niger) from 24 to 26 January 1995, have agreed to bring to the attention of the international community the severity of the special problems faced by women in LDCs and the need to adopt urgent measures to enhance their full participation in the development process, both as agents and beneficiaries, and thereby contribute to sustainable development in the LDCs.

2. Although some progress has been achieved in implementing the Paris Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, particularly in the social sector, these achievements are being threatened by the deteriorating economic conditions in most of these countries and their vulnerable position in the international economic system. This has been compounded by diminishing resources and the tendency to give lower priority in development planning and in international development assistance to programmes that would benefit women.

3. Some of the major obstacles that have seriously delayed progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action are related to women's marginalized position in the development process, notwithstanding their central role in the social and productive sectors in most countries.

4. On the whole, the situation of women continues to be considerably worse in the LDCs than in other groups of countries, and the gender gap is generally greater. For example, in terms of female-to-male school enrolment ratios, the ratios for the LDCs as compared with all developing countries in 1991, with respect to primary school enrolment, was 79 per cent and 87 per cent respectively; and the gap widens for secondary school enrolment, with 58 per cent for the LDCs and 76 per cent for all developing countries.

5. The average life expectancy of women in LDCs today is ten years shorter than the average for women in all developing countries combined (63 years). Moreover, in some LDCs, life expectancy dropped from 53 years in the period 1980 to 1985 down to 45 years in 1992.

6. Women form an important pool of human resources in the LDCs and play a major role in the economy. A full appraisal of their true contribution is rarely evident from the conventional data drawn from censuses and labour-force surveys.

7. In addition to problems of economic invisibility, there are other constraints that prevent women from playing their full role in socio-economic development. They are particularly hampered by limited access to productive resources, restricted education and training opportunities, the likelihood of heavy family responsibilities, prevalent attitudes regarding women's abilities and their proper socio-economic role, and women's own lack of knowledge about their rights.

8. Moreover, in poor households it is the women who bear the brunt of the poverty, owing to the unfair distribution of income, caloric intake and work burden. The effects of deepening poverty are felt more acutely by women who head the household.

9. In addition, while several LDCs have embarked on reforms aimed at good governance, some of these countries are still suffering from social and political upheavals, the burden of refugees and displaced persons, environmental degradation including desertification, and natural disasters.

10. Convinced that no progress towards sustainable development and a decent life will be possible without the full involvement of women, and with a view to contributing to achieving the objectives of the Programme of Action for the LDCs by the end of the 1990s, we strongly endorse the need forthe full and timely implementation of the following actions:

Education

(1) Make primary education compulsory and accessible through flexible minimum age of entry, and proximity of adequately staffed and equipped schools.

(2) Increase levels of enrolment and retention of girls in schools through incentives such as provision of school meals.

(3) Organize informal education programmes for mothers and young girls who are not able to attend school.

Population and health

(4) Bring health services closer to people by increasing the number of health care centres delivering quality services in both rural and urban areas, with particular attention to the needs of women and children.

(5) Use electronic and print media to disseminate information on health and population issues, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, negative traditional practices and the health impact of early marriages.

Violence against women

(6) Enact laws protecting women against violence, where such laws do not exist, and ensure their enforcement.

Refugee women

(7) Pay attention to the special needs of women and children in the areas of health and hygiene and allocation of relief packages, as well as women's involvement in the management of camps and the resolution of conflicts.

Agriculture

(8) Provide women farmers with the productive resources and institutional support services they need to enhance agricultural development.

Environment

(9) Implement the recommendations outlined in Agenda 21 of the Rio Summit to ensure effective participation of women in environment protection and management for sustainable development.

Small and medium-scale enterprises

(10) Provide an enabling legislative and policy environment conducive to the development of women's businesses in the informal and formal sectors through increased access to credit, training, information on marketing channels, infrastructures and other support services to reduce the burden of their role as mothers and housewives.

Networking

(11) Promote networking between women farmers and entrepreneurs in the LDCs on the one hand and between these networks and their partners in developed countries on the other.

Visibility and incorporation of women's concerns in national planning

(12) Insist on the urgent necessity to undertake research on and implement, in each country, an appropriate methodology for the collection and analysis of data differentiated and disaggregated by gender.

Participation of women in the decision-making process

(13) Recommend a stronger political will on the part of governments of LDCs in order to promote access for a greater number of women to positions of responsibility.

Women's rights

(14) Recommend to undertake, in collaboration with the NGOs, a policy of disseminating existing texts on the rights of women (for example through legal advice bureaux), as well as a participatory approach in the elaboration of texts.

Strengthening of NGOs

(15) Encourage the participation of NGOs and women's associations in the economic and social development process of LDCs.

International Support

(16) Recommend that the international support agencies give priority to LDCs and apply more flexible conditions concerning development assistance procedures, especially for programmes targeted to the poorest women in the LDCs.

(17) Complement and reinforce traditional government-to-government development cooperation by new procedures and mechanisms for direct support to NGOs and women's organizations. Promote the dissemination of information relating to financing possibilities and modalities offered by bilateral and multilateral cooperation institutions.

(18) Recommend to international support agencies that they incorporate gender issues in all their development programmes.

(19) Pay special attention to the reinforcement of institutional support, especially at the grass-roots level.

Follow up

(20) Strengthen and support pressure groups to ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the above measures.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

127. The Expert Group Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ms. Mailalé Mariama, Minister for Social Development, Population and the Promotion of Women in Niger.

128. The participants split into working groups to consider the following areas:

(i) Review and assessment of measures to enhance women's access and participation in the social sector

(ii) Review and assessment of measures to promote women's participation in the productive sector

(iii) Review and assessment of measures to incorporate women's concerns in mainstream development

(iv) Review and assessment of international support measures on promoting women's developmental role.

129. The working groups were chaired respectively by Ms. Raka Rashid, Ms. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Ms. Boly Barry Koumba and Ms. Sinikka Antila. Experts who served as Rapporteurs were Ms. Joy Kwesiga, Ms. Auxilia Ponga, Ms. Aimosaria Mzee, Ms. Mariama Diallo and Ms. Nivoherizo Rakotobe.

130. The list of the members of the Steering Committee and of the participants in the Expert Group Meeting is given in annex I.

131. The documentation was presented by the UNCTAD secretariat and by the consultants at the first plenary session. The list of documents presented at the Meeting is given in annex II.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee

1. H.E. Mme. Mailalé MARIAMA, Minister for Social Development, Population and Promotion of Women, Niamey, Niger

2. H.E. Begum Sarwari RAHMAN, Minister of State for Women and Children Affairs, Dhaka, Bangladesh

3. H.E. Ms. Elisabeth REHN, Member of European and Finnish Parliament, Former Minister for Equality Affairs, Finland *)

4. Dr. Filomina STEADY, Institute of Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Host Government

5. H.E. Mme Mailalé MARIAMA, Minister for Social Development, Population and Promotion of Women

6. Mme Haoua AFAGNIBO, Ministère de la Santé

7. Mr. Mado ADAMOU, Conseiller du Ministre

8. Mr. Garba BASSIROU, Directeur de la Population

9. Mme Brigitte DIA, Secrétaire général, Ministère de l'Industrie

10. Mme Mariama Keita DIALLO, Coordination des ONG & Associations Féminines (CONFAFEM)

11. Mr. Niandou HAROUNA, Personne Ressource

12. Mme Aïssata Kondo SAADOU, Comité International des Femmes Africaines pour le Développement (CIFAD)

13. Mr. Gombo SABI, Ministère du Plan

14. Mme Fatouma Zara SABO, Directrice de la Promotion Féminine

15. Mme Salamatou TRAORE, Comité de Lutte contre les Pratiques Traditionnelles (CONIPRAT)

Consultants

16. Dr. Prabha BASNET, Executive Director, Women Development, Research and Population Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal

17. Ms. Moustapha Roua BOUKAR KOURA, Niamey, Niger

18. Ms. Clarice DAVIES, Researcher and Consultant, Freetown, Sierra Leone *)

19. Dr. Nivoherizo RAKOTOBE, Senior Public Health Specialist in the Population Fields, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Experts

20. Mme Claire AGBIDINOUKOUN, Secrétaire Général de l'Association des Femmes Juristes du Bénin (AFJB), Cotonou, Benin

21. Ms. Aminatou DIALLO, Chairperson, AFGRED (Association des femmes guinéennes pour la recherche et le développement), Conakry, Guinea

22. H.E. Ms. Mariam SIR-ELKHATIM, Minister of State for Social Security and Social Development, Ministry of Social Planning, Khartoum, Sudan

23. Ms. B. Barry KOUMBA, Adviser on Training and Research, Pan African Institute for Development, West Africa - Sahel, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

24. Dr. Joy KWESIGA, Senior Lecturer and Acting Head, Women Studies Department Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

25. Ms. Aimosaria Y. MZEE, Executive Director, Credit Centres Organization, Dar-Es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania

26. Ms. Khempet PHOLSENA, Vice-President, Lao Women's Union, Vientiane, Lao PDR

27. Dr. Auxilia PONGA, Director, Women in Development Department, Office of the Deputy Minister, Planning and Development Co-operation, Lusaka, Republic of Zambia

28. Ms. Raka RASHID, Programme Specialist with US AID, Dhaka, Bangladesh

29. Ms. Isatou NJIE-SAIDY, Executive Secretary, Women's Bureau, Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Women's Affairs, Banjul, The Republic of The Gambia

International Organizations

30. Mr. Abdoulie JANNEH, Resident Representative of the UNDP, Niamey, Niger

31. Ms. M.J. MERMILLOD, Senior Home Economics Officer, Human Resources Institutions and Agrarian Reform Division, FAO, Rome, Italy

32. Ms. Fatouma Zara MOUSSA, Programme Officer, Focal Point for Women in Development, UNDP, Niamey, Niger

33. Dr. Monique RAKOTOMALALE, Director, UNFPA, Niamey, Niger

34. Ms. Gloria ROCES, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria

35. Ms. Françoise WEGE, Deputy Chief, African Centre for Women, ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

36. Ms. Natalya ZAKHAROVA, Social Affairs Officer, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, New York, USA

Donor Agencies

37. Ms. Sinikka ANTILA, WID Coordinator, FINNIDA, Helsinki, Finland

38. Ms. Aminata DANTE, Coopération Suisse, Niamey, Niger

39. Ms. Marguerite SCHLECHTEN, Coopération Suisse, Niamey, Niger

40. Ms. To TJOELKER, Conseillère Femmes et Développement, Ambassade Royale des Pays-Bas, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

UNCTAD

41. Mr. Hama Arba DIALLO, Director-in-Charge, Division for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries

42. Ms. Geraldina WEGENER, Chief, International Support Measures Branch, Division for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, and Focal Point for Women in UNCTAD

43. Ms. Lena CHIA

44. Ms. Loredana MARCHETTI

45. Ms. Kamala NARASIMHAN

46. Ms. Norjanah FLAKS

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*) Could not attend the Meeting.

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/1	Draft provisional agenda
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/2	Review and assessment of measures to enhance women's access to and participation in the social sector, with special emphasis on education, health and population, environment, major constraints and opportunities (Item 3 of the provisional agenda)
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/3	Review and assessment of measures to promote women's participation in the productive sector (Item 4 of the provisional agenda)
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/4	Review and assessment of measures to incorporate women's concerns in mainstream development (Item 5 of the provisional agenda)
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/5	Women in development in the least developed countries in the 1990s: review of the implementation of national and international support measures
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/5 (Add.1)	Annexe IV. Etude de cas: L'éducation des femmes au Niger
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/6	Involvement of women in social forestry programme in Nepal
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/7	Opportunities and constraints for female petty traders in Sierra Leone
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/8	Family planning through economic empowerment of women in Madagascar
UNCTAD/LDC/GE.1/9	L'éducation pour la population féminine au Niger